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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended for librarians planning to start an information brokerage, whether as an entrepreneur or as a member of a document delivery group in a library. The guide identifies specific skills and relevant characteristics required to establish a successful information brokerage firm and describes a model to assist readers in the process of undertaking an information brokerage firm as a viable business venture. Data was collected from questionnaires sent to successful information brokerages throughout the United States, and from in-depth interviews conducted with principals from six of these firms. Individuals were questioned about procedures used in establishing their businesses, their relevant personality characteristics for operating a successful venture, and general items concerning information brokering. Also included in the book are a brief history of information services and a review of the literature to familiarize readers with the profession. Major findings concluded that: (1) the majority of information brokerage firms were established prior to 1980 by one principal who holds an M.L.S. degree; (2) services offered most frequently by information brokers are research, consulting, online searching, document delivery, and manual searching; (3) most (85%) participants accept no legal responsibility for the information they provide clients; (4) participants generally fit the typical entrepreneurial profile; (5) money was not the impetus for initiating or remaining in information brokering; frustration with limitations/restrictions in traditional organizations primarily affected those decisions; (6) copyright issues were of minor concern to most respondents; and (7) information brokers surveyed did not consistently follow standard or recommended business procedures in the establishment of their companies. Appendices include the questionnaire and cover letter, interview questionnaire, and questionnaire responses. (Contains 59 references.) (MAS)